THE
WITNESS OF
RELIGIOUS
EXPERIENCE

THE RT. REV.
W. BOYD CARPENTER

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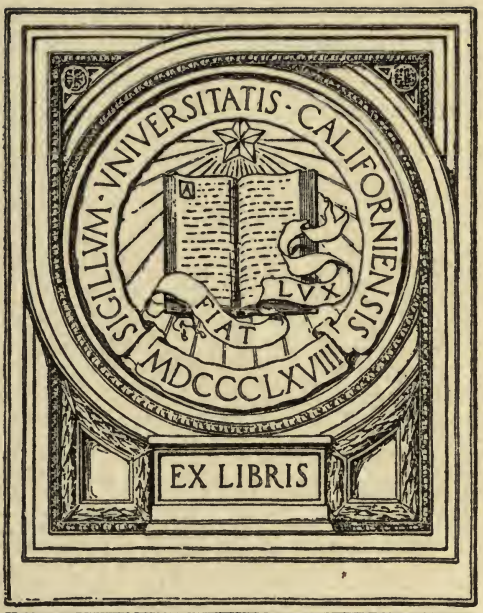
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THE DONNELLAN LECTURES DELIVERED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN, 1914, AND IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY, LENT, 1916

BY THE

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UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

LECTURE I

I HAVE given as the title of these lectures "The Witness of Religious Experience." If I had to choose a text I should probably refer to 1 John v. 10, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself," or else to that word of Christ, "The kingdom of God is within you." It is of this inner kingdom or inner witness that I wish to speak; for here—for all of us—is the heart of religion: here is that secret which God whispers to the soul and fills it with exceeding joy.

And now for a few minutes the world is shut out. The busy and strident noises of battlefield and market-place are far away. In the quiet of the House of God we can find peace. We retire from the strife and

turmoil of earth, from the clamour of her cares and her anxieties. There are greater things than the things of earth. The bodily needs require thought and planning: the needs of the soul require peace, and in the peaceful hour of inner converse with higher things the light of heaven may dawn upon us.

"I retire," said the saint, "I retire from the things without to the things within: I rise from the things within to the things above." This, too, might be my text. Can we by shutting out the noise of the world, and laying aside the demands of things without find that there is a ladder within which reaches up to heaven? I believe that we can. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." "The anointing which ye have received . . . teacheth you all things." The ladder is within. I ask you to join with me in these lectures in seeking it out, and perhaps in climbing a little nearer to heaven.

No erudition of any special character is needed: the things of God may be revealed

to babes, and may be the reinvigoration of strong men. All that is needed is singleness of heart—a quiet mind, the laying aside of preconceptions, the hunger for righteousness. For these let us pray. Every one that asketh receiveth.

I have said that a dispassionate judgment is needed. What is it that we are called upon to judge? Briefly, we are called upon to judge a great claim which is put forth by Christian people—indeed, I might say by religious people in all ages and in all countries. It is the claim that a man may know God, and that this knowledge is real and personal—that God may be known as truly and as unquestionably as we know the beating of our own hearts and the stirring of our own enthusiasms.

This claim of the knowledge of God as a personal experience is put forth in various forms: the forms are of little moment: the fact is the important matter; and in their witness to the fact the witnesses are at one. Shall we hear some of the witnesses?

St. Paul is a witness. He says, "I know whom I have believed." Lest any one

should say that this may refer to historical knowledge, I cite this other statement of St. Paul, "I live, but not I: Christ liveth in me."

St. John is another witness. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," and lest this again should be taken to mean that he belonged to the Christian society, I add this other word of his: "Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His spirit" (1 John iv. 13).

But it may be said: these passages belong to the Bible: they date from the Apostolic age, which was an age of great spiritual exaltation. If by exaltation be meant something akin to hallucination, I can only ask you to read the New Testament writers, and you will soon realize that there is no tinge of weak excitement in their spirit. There is a quiet reticence: their words are those of truth and soberness, but they are warm and living words: the writers feel as with a vivid reality that their knowledge of God is a deep, personal knowledge: their life is

spent in a divine companionship. With "a consciousness of God they endured grief, suffering wrongfully" (1 Peter ii. 19). "They had come to Christ and found in Him no mere abstraction nor mere historical figure, but the shepherd of their souls" (1 Peter ii. 25). "They knew the support of a divine presence: for though deserted by men, the Lord stood with them and strengthened them" (2 Tim. iv. 17).

But this witness is not local or temporary: it is not a witness found only in the early or in the Apostolic ages: it is a witness which meets us in every age and in every land. Time would fail me to summon and cite the great cloud of witnesses to the joy and reality of this personal knowledge of God.

"There are unfathomable powers in the depths of the human soul, because in the depths there is God Himself,"[1] is the language in which the biographer of St. Francis explains the spiritual comradeship of the saint with God. What can express this comradeship of the soul more vividly

[1] P. Sabatier, "Vie de S. François d'Assise," p. 214.

than these words of Pascal. "Unite me to Thyself: replenish me with Thyself . . . so that being inspired and acted on by Thee, it may be no longer I who live and suffer, but Thou, O my Saviour, who livest and sufferest in me."[1]

If we go from the Old World to the New, we find the same joy in this inner divine friendship. Jonathan Edwards realized so intensely the divine presence that he seemed to be in a "wilderness, far from all mankind, sweetly conversing with Christ, and swallowed up in God."[2]

I need not multiply examples: your own memory will supply many more; for the realization of God as the inner friend of the soul finds expression in the hymns of the Church. God is "the spring of all my joys, the life of my delights," is the witness of one. Cowper recalls the peaceful hours he once enjoyed when he sighed "for a closer walk with God." C. Wesley cried out for the refuge of the divine love,

[1] "Thoughts on Religion," p. 320.
[2] Dr. A. Phelps, "The Still Hour," p. 11.

Jesu ! Lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy Bosom fly.

And Toplady, though in an opposite theological camp, knew the security of the same refuge.

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.

Thus the claim that God may be known —known to the soul of man as a refuge, a comrade, a joy—is heard throughout the Christian centuries, and is as strong and clear to-day as it was in the early days of the Christian Church. This claim is to a knowledge possible, real, and personal: it is to a knowledge so pervasive and powerful that it can kindle gladness, calm apprehension, and awaken activity.

It is the claim that God can be known as a great reality. Is it a legitimate claim? Can we, the children of a scientific age, trained to a wholesome, and perhaps exaggerated scepticism accept the claim? Does it represent something real, tangible, verifi-

able? Or are these claims due to purely subjective impressions, carrying no evidence or any corresponding objective reality? Are they fictions or are they expressions of fact? Here we reach the important point? Can we bring these claims to the test of reality? Can they be classed among facts or not? This is, I repeat, the important matter; for the demand of scientific thought to-day is that truths or so-called laws must be based on fact. Are we prepared to stand or fall by this test?

We cannot, I think, refuse to accept the principle that truths must be supported by facts: in other words, that without facts we cannot urge the acceptance of any theory.

Now let us understand this principle; for it is easy to juggle with words, and scientific men as well as theologians have confused the issue by a profuse employment of ambiguous language. The principle which we are asked to accept is this: law or truth must be founded on facts. A mode of reasoning which was common in pre-scientific days was this: a theory was advanced, and

then facts were collected to support the theory. The objection to this method was clear enough. Facts may be collected to support almost any theory: it is easy enough to select the facts in favour and to ignore the facts against the theory. Clearly the right course is to collect all the facts which bear upon the subject: interrogate them: analyse them: classify them, and then from the facts so observed and sifted, deduce the law or truth. First the facts: then the law or truth. This is the true scientific order.

Here we need to ask a fundamental question? What is meant by a fact? One of the confusions of thought, which often meets us, is due to the misunderstanding of the meaning of fact. Too often an object is supposed to be a fact. What can be more clear or simple facts than stones, or brick, or mortar, or gold or silver? But these are objects and not facts: they are objects about which we desire to ascertain facts. When I have discovered that the stone is marble or granite I have ascertained a fact about this object—stone. A fact is the truth of a

statement. The dictionary definition of a fact is that it is a real state of things. In its first meaning a fact is something done—a deed: it then comes to mean a true condition, of which we can say "this is true indeed": it is the correspondence between statement and reality: it is different from opinion, for opinion may not correspond with the real state of things. *Fact expresses an actual harmony between statement and reality:* a true statement of the condition of things; as, for instance, if I say that gold is yellow, I make a statement which truly expresses the state of the case.

Mill in his logic writes: "In order to believe that gold is yellow I must have the idea of gold and the idea of yellow, and something having reference to these ideas must take place in my mind. But my belief has not reference to the ideas, it has reference to the things. What I believe is a fact relating to the outward thing gold, and the impression made by that outward thing upon the human organ, i.e. the impression made by gold upon the eye."

Here we may notice that the fact turns upon the constancy of the impression which gold has made upon the eyes of many: I see that gold is yellow, but many more before me have seen gold and have seen it to be yellow. There is a true and continuous harmony between the condition of gold and the statement that it is yellow. Gold is the object: the statement that it is yellow is the fact.

Similarly when Newton saw the apple fall: the apple was the object; the fact was that the apple fell.

We may now apply this to the religious consciousness or experience. Man is the object: man possessed of a religious consciousness or a power of religious experience is the fact. Or to put the same in a simpler form we may say: the fact is that man is a religious animal.

Is this a fact? i.e. does the statement correspond with the reality of the case?

Let us avoid all irrelevant matters. I am not now asking the meaning of this religious consciousness in man: I am not inquiring

about its origin. The questions about its source or its significance can come later. Now we are only asking, Is it a fact that man is a religious animal? We need spend but little time here. Everywhere and in every race traces of religion or religious consciousness are to be found. Researches were undertaken with the object—I might even say with the hope—of discovering somewhere a race or tribe without religious rite or feeling; but the researches ended in establishing the fact that everywhere the religious instinct could be found. Here is the witness of Quatrefages—no mean authority on the subject. He said: "Obliged, in my course of instruction, to review all human races. I have sought Atheism in the lowest as well as in the highest. I have nowhere met with it, except in individuals, or in more or less limited schools, such as those which existed in Europe in the last century, or which may still be seen in the present day. . . . In every place and at all times the mass of populations has escaped it: we nowhere find either a great human race, or even a

division however unimportant of that race, professing Atheism." [1] There is no race, we may conclude, without some idea of God, and some consciousness of a link or bond binding them to Him. No doubt the ways in which religion expresses itself are very various; but we are not now dealing with these varieties, we are only seeking an answer to the question whether man is or is not a religious being. The answer is clearly and overwhelmingly that he is religious. In other words, it is a fact that man is a religious being. When we say that man possesses a consciousness of religion, we are not stating a mere opinion or belief: we are saying what is in harmony with the real state of the case: we are stating a fact.

Hence the religious consciousness of man belongs to the region of fact. This is the fact or set of facts we have to deal with; we are not dealing with something which is a mere imagination, a wild speculation, but a real and undeniable fact.

Our next duty is to examine the nature of

[1] "The Human Species," p. 482.

this fact—to observe its features, and endeavour to find its place among other facts of experience.

Now, the first thing we may notice about this fact is that this religious consciousness is not a dead or inert thing: it has energy and power: it is a force as well as a fact. It has made itself felt in history: it has built temples and cathedrals. Every place of worship—whether the Taj in India, the Parthenon at Athens, St. Peter's at Rome, or our own Abbey—witnesses the energy or driving power of this force. Men have tried to explain its origin: they have found it in animism or in ghosts; but these leave religion unexplained. "In all religious movements of a large character there are influences at work which cannot be wholly accounted for by historical investigation," says Professor Jastrow.[1]

Religion thus is a force full of activity, and exercising enormous influence over human history: it is perhaps an unexplained force; but it is not therefore insignificant.

There are forces which enter into our daily

[1] "The Study of Religion," p. 179.

life which have not yet been explained, but because they are mysterious, they are not therefore insignificant. Take as an example magnetism. It is a force, but it is a force not yet understood. This is what the Director of the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism at the Carnegie Institution in Washington, U.S.A., tells us: "As regards the actual motions of the earth's magnetic poles and the precise cause or causes, we may say with Halley that these are 'Secrets as yet utterly unknown to mankind and are reserved for the industry of future ages.' . . . In spite of the accumulated facts of over three centuries, we are still unable to say definitely to what the earth's magnetic field is really due."[1]

Magnetism, in fact, defies definition. When experts were occupied in preparing a dictionary definitions were required for magnet and magnetism. And this is what was given. A magnet is "something acted upon by magnetism": magnetism was "something acting upon a magnet": it was announced that these definitions were "condensed from the works of

[1] Dr. Bauer, Fourth Halley Lecture in Oxford, 1913.

a thousand" scientists, who had "illuminated the subject with a great white light, to the inexpressible advancement of human knowledge."

Magnetism is a force, and an unexplained force; but not therefore a negligible or uninteresting force: rather its mystery challenges our curiosity. In the same way, if we regard religion as an unexplained force, it is not therefore valueless or unattractive; it rather, on this account, appeals to us as demanding more of our thought and attention. In the religious consciousness we are aware of a power, not our own, which makes demands upon us, and has exercised over man a strange constraining influence.

The Eastern no less than the Western, the Hindu as well as the Christian, is awake to the magic of its power.

Rabindranath Tagore pictures himself as a little pipe through which there speaks a power greater than himself. As of old the Baptist said: "I am the voice—only the voice"; so the Indian poet says: "This little flute of a reed Thou hast carried over hills and dales,

and hast breathed through it melodies eternally new."

The Western no less than the Eastern felt this truth. Robert Barclay, in his "Apology for the Quakers," claimed this inward illumination, "evident and clear of itself, forcing by its own evidence and clearness the well-disposed understanding to assent, irresistibly moving the same thereunto." [1]

We reach, therefore, two conclusions to-day. The religious consciousness or experience is a fact: it is as real a fact as magnetism or gravity. It is more: it is a force, and a force of such magnitude and influence that it cannot be ignored. It is, if you will, from a human point of view, an unexplained force: it stands outside definition. "We cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth." It is, like magnetism, a real force, but its source and its law of movement lie among the secrets of the universe.

But though from this point of view inexplicable, it is very real: it enters into actual life: it changes a man's outlook: it influences his

[1] "Apology," p. 4, 6th ed., 1736.

career: it elevates his thought: it brings a deeper consciousness of personality. The man who is the subject of its influence may tell us of his experience, but he cannot explain. He can only say, "I do not understand: but a change came, and things were different, and I was different: my whole outlook upon life was altered by a force other than my own."

We are thus in the presence of a force which has been marvellously influential in human history.

Our next step must be to inquire into the nature of this force as it is seen at work among men.

This I must reserve for the next lecture.

LECTURE II

WE have seen that religious consciousness in man is a fact, and a force. It is a fact both in its universality and its continuousness. It is a force seen in its activity, and we may place it among unexplained forces. The efforts which have been made to explain its origin in terms of things earthly have not been successful. Professor Jastrow's judgment on this appears to be correct. "It is urged," he says, "from a scientific point of view that the peculiar direction taken by religion among certain peoples cannot be accounted for by a process of purely historical development. This position is indeed justified. After due allowance is made for the natural causes, which led to such a remarkable movement as is represented

by the ethical monotheism of the prophets or by the appearance of Jesus Christ, or by the rise of Islamism, there remains an element which cannot be explained by historical research. . . . In all religious movements of a large character there are influences at work which cannot be wholly accounted for by historical investigation."[1]

We are then in the presence of a force which while it operates through natural means, yet remains in a large degree mysterious. It is like magnetism: we feel its power: we have evidence of its activity and capacity; but we cannot explain. It is mysterious like the wind: it bloweth where it listeth: we hear the sound: we see the effects: but we "cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth." St. Paul described it (Rom. i. 16) as a power, but he "conceives of it as essentially a mode of personal activity."[2]

Yet one thing we do know about it. It differs in a sense from other forces in this that it works in man. Its origin may be

[1] Jastrow, "The Study of Religion," pp. 178–9.
[2] See Sanday and Headlam on Romans, p. 23.

outside of us: its force is felt in man. If we want to observe it, we must note its effects in the mind, emotions, and will of man.

As I note its effects, it seems to me to be a force which tends to educate or help forward the development of man: it lays hold upon some great instincts of man and gives them a new and noble direction: it seems to claim man in the completeness of his nature.

John Fiske told us that evolution in its later manifestation worked no longer for the development of things physical, but wrought in human history for the education in man of those social qualities on which the life and happiness of the race depended. Social qualities and family affections were called into play by the lengthening period of childhood. In other words, nature was now at work developing not now the physical but the psychical powers of man. When I view the story of religion I seem to see at work a power which even if unexplained in origin is clear in its tendency to develop man's whole personality.

Religion or religious consciousness in man does this.

By claiming the whole man.

Too often we have been inclined to take the part for the whole. Man has been looked upon as not merely having, but being mind. His intellect has been regarded as equivalent to the whole man. At other times the emotions are given prominence, and sentiment has been taken as a sort of sum total of man. Or again, there have been times when the demands of man's physical nature have been given such exaggerated importance that it might be supposed that man was just body and nothing more.

Absurd as is this partial way of looking at man, the affairs of life have in one way or another fostered this onesidedness of view. We must live, it has been said, and moral considerations have been put aside for the sake of bodily needs. Or again, Art and Science have emphasized the value of intellect and imagination, and conscience has been silenced in the court of final appeal. Philosophy has exaggerated thought: science has

deified knowledge: ethics have laid stress upon right conduct. It has remained for religion to claim the whole man—his mind, his affections, his will; and to refuse to be satisfied with any partial offering.

Here I may be challenged, and told that there are religions which obviously do not claim man's whole nature. It is true. Religions differ in the extent of their claim upon man: in some cases they only ask, as in the religion of Latium, a certain ceremonial exactness in the performance of religious rites. Religions, moreover, differ and differ very much in their relation to ethics: some insist upon moral conduct: others have little or no relation with ethics. I admit fully that in their demands upon man's nature, religions differ widely from one another.

But while this is true of different religions, Religion, which shows itself in human history —not in one religion, but in many, Religion, if we follow her history, refusing to identify her with any one form of religion, Religion in the long run claims the whole man.

There is a religion which prescribes a rite

or ceremony and seems content with its exact performance, but Religion soon appears in another form and makes demand upon the moral nature of man. It is interesting in this matter to notice how words which at first had only a ceremonial meaning at length came to have a spiritual and ethical meaning. For example, and here I quote from the commentary on the Romans by Professor Sanday and Dr. Headlam, the word ἁγίος (holy) is said to have developed its meaning "by a process of deepening from without inward." The word grew in its significance: it first meant something separated or dedicated to God's service; but as what was so set apart ought to be unblemished, so it came to mean without spot or stain or defect. From this its meaning readily passed over into the moral sphere; and as God Himself was without blemish or stain, it rose in significance to mean that which resembled God in its ethical or spiritual purity. The history of a word may thus show Religion at work gradually extending her claim over the whole realm of man—asking first man's goods: then his acts:

then his thoughts and motives, and reaching at last that supreme demand—"as He which has called you is Holy; so be ye holy in all conversation and godliness."

Whatever may have been the defects of certain religions, Religion as a whole has grown in her claims upon man, and does not rest content till the whole man has surrendered to her influence.

I know that in saying this I am putting myself in opposition to the views of some learned writers on the subject. Some have defined Religion as being sentiment and sentiment only: others, laying stress upon doctrine, have treated it as a system of dogmas: others again have seen in it only a philosophy, or only a ceremonial; but the truth is that while Religion enlists sentiment and requires dogmatic force and rite in which to express itself, religion is more than these: these are only forms of expression: they may belong to her, but she is more than they.

Professor Tiele seems to me to be right when he says: "Religion differs from other manifestations of the human mind in this that whereas

in the domain of Art, the feelings and the imagination predominate, in that of Philosophy abstract thought is paramount, and the main object of Science is to know accurately, whilst Ethics are concerned chiefly with the emotions and the fruit they yield, in Religion all these factors operate alike, and if their equilibrium is disturbed a morbid religious condition is the result."

Religion asks the whole man: it is not content to accept a part for the whole. In doing this it is in harmony with correct psychology, which refuses to treat man as though he were an assemblage of faculties without personality, and which tells us that in every act man calls into exercise thought, feeling, and will. The degree in which these are present in any act will vary with the act; in some thought preponderates, in others feeling; and in certain others, will; but in every act these powers combine in varying proportions. Similarly, Religion asks the whole man, and forces upon us the truth that man is not an assemblage of mechanical forces, but a living, thinking, feeling, and willing entity—in short, that he is what we call for convenience'

sake a personality. The unit of life for man is not his intellect, or his emotion, or his will, but his personality. This unit—the personal man, a complete self-directing organism—is the highest and noblest thing we know in nature, and this noble thing Religion claims unmaimed and unblemished; and in doing so she contributes to man's knowledge of himself. She enlists sentiment, evoking the poetry of our nature, and under her influence temples are built and voices of prayer and praise are heard, striving heavenward. She claims intellect; and though at times she may have seemed hostile to thought, it was, remember, her claim upon human thought which gave rise to dogmas; for dogmas are the attempt to harmonize religious experience with the facts of life. But Religion asks more: she asks the will. She claims the spring-head of human action and conduct. And in this broad claim she is affirming her right to treat man as an entity: she will deal with him as a personality, and in the growth of her claims upon man she compels him to recognize his possession of this great and unique gift among the creatures of God—viz. his personality.

In making this claim, Religion works upon and develops the power of man's natural instincts. It is no part of religion to destroy or mutilate nature : it rather acts upon man as a force which fosters and fulfils man's best instincts.

Let me speak of one great instinct or tendency of human nature—the instinct for self-expression. So strong is this in man that I am tempted to call it a necessity of our nature. Life, vigorous and various, teems with energy around us, and all things seem bound by the necessity of self-expression. "To every seed," said the Apostle, "is given its own body." The seed once planted seeks to express itself, to develop that body or form which is natural to it. The harvest and the flower tell the tale of plants which reach their perfection in self-expression.

This urgent necessity shows itself early. The little gestures and grimaces of the child are no doubt learned by the imitation of others, but soon we feel that they are due to an effort of personal self-expression. Every child is in some fashion or another a born "actor," as we

often say; but this is, in truth, the attempt to express self in some way.

The higher evidence of this necessity for self-expression is found in Art. Art is the resource of this necessity in imaginative minds. Painting and sculpture and poetry attest the urgency of that spirit in man which seeks for self-expression. The joy and peace of the home may be said to be rooted in the same necessity. Children are the realization of self-expression, and the contentment of home life results from the happiness of a mode of self-expression which lives and is the earnest of a sort of continuous self-expression. It thus happens that life becomes abundant and joyous in a multitude of new forms, all the channels open to self-expression are filled, and the world teems with life and beauty and song, because man has been created with this ardour, which delights in expressing itself in richly varying forms.

In life we first gain consciousness of self, and out of this rises, when once realized, the desire of self-expression. The earlier stages of life train us in consciousness of self. Pain makes us

conscious of self through bodily sensation: the angry resentment which so often accompanies pain makes us conscious of self through emotion, which is more than a mere bodily sensation: through pain we are conscious of our bodily self: through emotion we are conscious of our psychical self. Through kinship we become aware of our relationship with others; and in their activities the desire for self-expression is through the imitative faculty called into conscious power.

The spheres of self-expression, however, are limited, i.e. they do not yield to the spirit adequate opportunity for self-expression. Whatever a man may achieve in art or song, there is always a check upon his ardour in the medium he employs. Words are not adequate to feeling or aspiration. Stone and colours are not equal to the rendering of the soul's great imaginings. As Dante said, "*La materia e sorda.*" The medium is deaf to the artist's demands. There is the picture which never will be painted: the song which will never be sung because the soul outstrips the earthly material, which, how-

ever skilfully used, fails to embody what the spirit of the artist has seen. Here we touch one of the notes of man's supreme sadness. He must die before he can achieve that high and great thing which he saw on the heights. He cannot make anything after the pattern showed him on the mount.

Religion meets us here. Religion, from one point of view, is man's last and greatest effort at self-expression. It is his excursion into regions greater than earth: it is his yearning to find means of self-expression better and more enduring than words or stones. He builds his temple, and decorates it with crude and grotesque ornaments and adorns it with garish colours and tawdry splendour; but the grotesque is symbolical. In all the materials he uses he seeks to express that which is above everything physical: his soul's visions and dreams find expression in strange and unnatural forms. He is in his religion a creature still yearning for self-expression. What earth cannot furnish the regions above earth may yield. The self-expression which he cannot find fully satisfied in art he may find in religion.

But though the instinct for self-expression is the same whether in art or religion, there is yet this difference, viz. that in art man is seeking the expression of thoughts, ideas, imaginings: in religion he is seeking the expression of himself. He is seeking that expression of self which is the greatest of all: he is seeking self-realization. Life, earth, time, the beauty of flowers, sea or sky, the music of bird or thunder or ocean—they cannot yield scope enough for a being who is greater than all these: he may find opportunity for partial self-expression in these: for full realization of self he needs more: and religion, as measured from within man, is the striving for this full realization of self for which earth with her many voices is unequal. "The sense of the infinite lies at the root of man's whole spiritual life," wrote Tiele; and we may add: The desire to express himself in terms which belong to the infinite explains a large number of the strange and bewildering things which meet us in the history of religion.

We can hear this unsatisfied yearning in nearly all forms of religion. "We can hear,"

wrote Professor Max Müller, "a groaning of the spirit, a struggle to conceive the inconceivable, to utter the unutterable, a longing for the infinite, a love of God."[1]

This is that longing which we read of in so many writings. It is a longing of man's whole nature: it brings into its service the mind, the will, the affection, and uses them all. Where it employs the mind, it becomes theology; where it uses the affection, it becomes psalm and hymn; where it uses the will, it becomes sacrifice and ceremony. It cries out like the Psalmist athirst for the living God: it refuses earth, and scorns, like Lacordaire, to leave the soul in a heap of dirt: it exclaims with Augustine, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and we cannot rest till we rest in Thee."

It is the yearning of the whole personality of man for that medium in which it can realize itself in all the completeness of its nature.

Now the result of these thoughts is to show us that religion works through the human instinct of self-expression; and the instinct so

[1] Hibbert Lectures.

worked upon appears to be a developing instinct. From one point of view then religion might be regarded as a developing instinct of human nature. It is the innate and unappeasable desire for self-expression moving forward and seeking to realize itself in the region of the spirit. It can command a measure of success in the physical world, but inasmuch as man is spirit as well as body, no mere material medium of expression can satisfy him. The same instinct which seeks self-expression in things earthly, seeks it in the spiritual sphere. When we think of this instinct of man seeking to make itself felt in the spiritual world, we realize that Religion may historically be regarded as the story of man's effort to realize himself in the realm with which his higher nature has kinship.

It has been said that life transforms individuality into personality. We are individuals, i.e. possessed of individual souls, from an early period of our life, but only as we develop the full consciousness of our self-hood can we be said to possess personality. In the legal sense man becomes a "persona" when he can

exercise the rights of citizenship, i.e. enter into real and useful relationship with his fellowmen. It is a sort of capacity for comradeship which makes him a person. We may apply the same class of ideas to the religious development: it, too, leads man onwards, calling out all his powers of thought and will and affection, developing his whole nature and endowing him with the sense of his own personality, and so preparing him for comradeship with the divine—for that intercourse between the soul and God which we call personal.

I am willing to admit all the difficulties which surround us when we speak of God as possessed of personality. If I were speaking the language of metaphysics or philosophy I might hesitate to use the word; but if we take personality to mean the capacity for comradeship, the right of citizenship, then we may claim the right to describe the relationship between God and the soul as one subsisting between those who possess personality and who can enter into personal relationship with one another.

Thus whether I look at Religion as a Force, educating or training man, or ask what relation it bears to man's instinctive desire for self-expression, I am led to the same result, viz. the realization of Personality. This, which in one sense is the final stage in an evolutionary process, is nevertheless an initial stage in true religious experience—for in all religious experience the personality of man is taken for granted. It is I as a person who experienced this or that: it was my emotion which was stirred, my thoughts which were awakened, my will which was determined. It is this personality for which religion has been seeking through the ages; it is the evoking of this personality into self-realization which Religion through its various forms—crude, fantastic, erudite, philosophical, or emotional—has been desiring.

It is by this personality alone that I can know God.

For let us consider what this Personality implies: it means the possession in one organism of powers which are nobler than any which eye or ear can discover in the universe.

The Frenchman mockingly said, "I have sought God in the heavens, but the sweep of my telescope never discovered Him." Religious feeling was offended. Had not the Psalmist said, "The heavens declare the glory of God"? Yes, the heavens declare God's glory, but God Himself is not known through the physical universe. His glory is read in the heavens by those who know Him within themselves. When the poet declared that the sweeping tempest, the glittering snowy heights, and the loud-voiced avalanche all spoke of God, he only meant that, because God was within, God's footsteps could be seen without.

And where after all could God reveal Himself to man except in the highest power which man possesses, and that is man's personality? If I mistake not, Professor Bradley allows that man's personality is the only vehicle—it is my own word—through which the knowledge of God can come; for after saying that it would be, in his view, absurd to suppose that religion would be ruined without the idea of Personality in God, he adds that one may

"maintain, in another sense, that the personality of God is a necessary truth. If without that belief religion remains imperfect, and if, on the other hand, religion's claim must be perfectly satisfied, it will follow that the above belief is true, and in a sense is necessary to religion." We may see what value he attaches to the claim of religion by recalling another passage in which he says: "The main interest and the genuine claim of the religious consciousness is, to my mind, the ground on which everything must be based. Whatever ideas are required to satisfy the above interest and claim must, I think, be true—true, that is really, though not absolutely. Hence it is solely by an appeal to the religious consciousness that, in my judgment, the question as to God's personality must be answered." [1]

Thus, though in Mr. Bradley's view a Person must be finite, yet for the purposes and practical claims of the religious consciousness we must accept the idea of personality in God as something which brings us who are personalities into living or real touch with

[1] "Truth and Reality," p. 449.

Him. It is a needful assumption that there must be in God something corresponding to that Personality which is the highest thing we know. And if we clear our minds of the philosophical environment of the word, and treat it is as a word expressing the capacity for citizenship or comradeship, then we may use it without fear of metaphysical confusion. In any case, if God is to be known at all, He will be known, not in that which is lowest in us, but in that which is highest, and the highest we know is our personality. In that, if anywhere, we may find personal comradeship with Him.

This conclusion, which as a possibility Professor Bradley accepts, is the conclusion which thoughtful men of various schools have reached. "His dwelling is neither in heaven nor earth, but in the heart of man. . . ."[1] "There is the belief of the head and the belief of the heart. And these two blend in one. As the heart believes, the objects of belief gradually clear and become definite to us. We no longer use words merely: we feel within us that

[1] Jowett, "Plato's 'Republic,'" iii. xxxi.

they have a meaning; but our inward experience becomes the rock on which we stand: it is like the consciousness of our own existence." [1]

In that which is highest in us, in that the existence of which is the surest thing we know, we meet with Him who is greater than our hearts and knoweth all things. Something we meet which corresponds to our Personality. We have been seeking self-expression, and we realize at last that only in Him can we find the fullest scope for such expression. We with the great gift and consciousness of our Personality cannot find adequate expression of ourselves in materials and media which are lower than ourselves: only in Him who made us in His image, only in Him who has been training us through religious consciousness to the knowledge of ourselves and the satisfaction of self-expression, can we really find ourselves, and in finding ourself we find ourselves in Him. This religious consciousness, this unexplained force, is after all due to the fact

[1] Jowett, "College Sermons," p. 21.

that He was in us, and it has led us on to the discovery that we are in Him who is true. In finding ourselves we find God, and in finding God we find ourselves.

LECTURE III

WE have seen that the religious consciousness in its development leads to self-realization, i.e. to the conviction of our own personality. In realizing ourselves, we realize that within us there is a meeting ground between us and God. In other words, the development of the religious consciousness leads to the verification of those words of Christ—"The Kingdom of God is within you." Here is the home of religious experience: it is possible to meet with God in the soul, though we may seek Him vainly in earth or in the sky. We may find Him within, and finding Him within we may realize that it is only in Him that we shall find full expression of ourselves.

Now is there in this inward experience any

order or law of progress? or is the inward experience merely vague and chaotic—an experience like that of the clouds which take on ever-changing forms as wind and atmosphere play upon them? Can we as those who may be the subjects of religious experience detect any general principles according to which these experiences act?

We are dealing, remember, not with dead material, but with souls—alive, palpitating with energy, possessed of individuality, and living under the order of a continuous growth. Is all therefore uncertain, or can we find any type or pattern of the development of religious progress?

We are in the realm of personality. The laws, as we call them when we speak of dead material things, are not the same in the realm of free personalities; but we are not in the realm of haphazard. Ideas now become blended with will and choice, impulse and judgment. Ideas develop into drama. Can we find some outline of the drama of the soul? Has it any recurring features?

We may—indeed we must—confine our-

selves to Christian religious experience here.

The religious consciousness which is being educated by experience has shown interesting features all along the line of human history; but with the advent of Christianity, religious experience has developed and given to us the clearest and best specimens of such religious experience. At any rate, we are selecting that specimen of religious experience which shows the clearest marks and can be investigated from the richest resources.

And here we are not without the help of experienced teachers. The subject of Christian experience has been investigated, as we all know, in the late Professor James's famous book. Professor Granger, in his book entitled "The Soul of the Christian," has dealt with the subject with scholarly impartiality and remarkable insight, while from a more external point of view the question has been investigated by Professor Starbuck, who has endeavoured to apply strictly scientific tests to the examination of Christian experiences. We cannot deem ourselves in a region of

unreality when a matter of this kind is thus deliberately investigated by men of admitted thought and scientific habit of mind. What, then, are the results of this examination of religious experience at the hands of these eminent men? As might be expected, the religious experiences investigated show great varieties, and I suppose it would not be untrue to say that religious experiences must naturally vary according to the temperaments, characters, and circumstances of the people concerned. But just as the statistician who deals with varieties of population is yet able to indicate a certain order or law of fluctuation in the story of communities, so also, amid the great varieties of characters who have been the subject of religious experiences, there has been traced one strong and leading type which attracts irresistibly the attention of the investigator. It is the type which for distinction's sake we may call the Pauline type.

It challenges our attention because St. Paul stands out among early Christian teachers not only as the most vigorous and remarkable exponent of Christian thought, but as one

whose personal experience showed in such a striking manner the spiritual power which was at work in the early days of the Church. Indeed, it may be said that St. Paul's theological conceptions grew out of his spiritual experiences. Beneath all his arguments there is the strong undercurrent of a personal conviction which counts for a great deal more than his method or system of presenting his views. So strong was the influence of St. Paul that it has been affirmed that the Christian faith as generally received was a creation of St. Paul rather than an offspring of the work of Christ. I do not share this view, and later on I hope to deal with the supposed discrepancy between the religious experience of St. Paul and the religious consciousness of our Lord. But this must wait. Meanwhile the type of experience which is presented to us by St. Paul is one which is so common, i.e. possesses so many parallels in Christian history, that it need not surprise us that it has been deemed by some the only type of religious experience among Christian people.

What, then, is the nature of this Pauline type of experience? Let us trace it in the story of the Apostle.

He first appears on the scene as a man who is living a self-satisfied life. He has no misgivings: his conscience does not upbraid him: he pursues his persecution of the Church of God without any feeling of self-reproach or moral doubt. He tells us, "I thought I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth." Then there came the great central experience of his life with its sudden sense of self-condemnation, followed by the solitary struggle in those days of contemplation in the desert of Arabia. Lastly came the life of joyous consecrated service undisturbed by any misgiving save the regret for those years of his life before this unique experience became his. Now St. Paul has explained to us the nature of this experience. He tells us that he lived a life of self-satisfaction. "I was alive without the law once." He tells us that this was followed by an experience of deep dissatisfaction arising from the consciousness that he could not fulfil the ideals of the law

which had left him so long undisturbed. "When I would do good," he says, "evil is present with me." And, lastly, he tells us of the deep joy which is his as he fixes his faith upon Another: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Further, he has given us in a succinct and epigrammatic form his own rationale of this change: "I through the law died unto the law that I might live unto God. I have been crucified with Christ yet I live, and yet no longer I but Christ liveth in me, and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in the faith, the faith which is in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself up for me." The case of St. Paul is the specimen case of that class of experience which I have called by his name, but the features of this experience have been repeated times without number. The features are the sense of satisfaction exchanged for one of dissatisfaction, and this dissatisfaction exchanged for one of the highest satisfaction of a changed soul. These three stages turn upon a central ex-

perience; the satisfaction of the early stage is exchanged for the higher satisfaction of the later stage, but is only reached through an experience of deep and bitter self-dissatisfaction. These experiences we find repeated in the case of St. Augustine. His life was one of worldly pleasure; then came the period of anxiety, of long search for truth, and often of agony of mind, and at length he reached the haven of spiritual rest. Once his cry was full of pain, as of the pain of death. ". . . I became more wretched, and Thou nearer," were his words; he sought to explore his heart. "I entered even unto my inward self, Thou being my Guide; and able I was, for Thou wert become my helper. I entered and beheld with the eye of my soul . . . the Light unchangeable." [1] But the shining of this light only made clearer to him his own shortcomings and the power of sin. "But when a deep consideration had from the secret bottom of my soul drawn together and heaped up all my misery in the sight of my heart, there arose a mighty storm, bringing a mighty shower of

[1] "Confessions," Book vii. (x.), 16.

tears. . . . To this purpose spake I much unto thee. . . . *Remember not our former iniquities*, for I felt I was held by them."[1] Then he took up St. Paul's writings and read: "*Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh.* No further would I read, nor needed I; for instantly at the end of this sentence, by a light as it were of serenity infused into my heart, all the darkness of doubt vanished."[2]

These cases are witnesses of the way in which what has been called the dark night of the soul gives place at last to the morning. The words of Molinos are true: "The soul is not to be disquieted, that it sees itself encompassed with darkness, because that is an instrument of its greater felicity."[3] One is tempted to quote the parallel thought from that sad singer who perished all too young:

> "The gloomy mantle of the night,
> Which o'er my sinking spirit steals,
> Will vanish with the morning light,
> Which God, my East, my Sun, reveals."

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[1] Book viii. (xii.), 28. [2] Ibid. (xii.), 29. pp. 170, 171.
[3] Molinos, "Golden Thoughts," p. 48. Bryce & Son, Glasgow, 1883.

Professor James and Dr. Starbuck agree that the facts and phenomena seem to indicate a general harmony in the experiences. Thus Professor James summarizes the experiences as generally exhibiting the following cycle. He affirms that under all discrepancies of creed there is a common nucleus to which these experiences bear testimony. This common nucleus consists of two parts; first, an uneasiness, followed by its solution. According to Professor Starbuck there are two types of the experience of spiritual awakening, one arising from a sense of incompleteness, the other—which he calls an eruptive type—characterized by the breaking up of evil habits. But both types have much in common, both go through three stages of experience, namely conviction, crisis, new life. This agrees practically with Professor James's two-fold division: the uneasiness, of which Professor James speaks, corresponds with conviction, and the word "solution" employed by Professor James covers what Professor Starbuck calls crisis and new life. The new life, he says, is the real self.

Throughout the experience it is the real self which is being sought. After the awakening, contentment which had existed before, contentment with the lower life, is impossible, and no rest is reached till the higher life is accepted as the true life in which the true self is found. Thus Professor Starbuck writes: "The feeling of oneness (with God or Christ) is the experience in which the most prominent thing which presents itself at the time is the sense of freedom and harmony that follows the change and the consciousness that the life is now the completer embodiment of the larger spiritual world."

Lastly, we may notice the coincidences which this law suggests with the demands which the religious consciousness makes upon the religions which have been presented to it. Every religion seeks to satisfy man's sense of dependence by the setting forth of some god upon whose power or partiality or love man may rely. But the demand of the religious consciousness goes further, for most religions recognize that man wishes to enter into harmony or fellowship with the Deity.

Men even in moments of self-satisfaction feel their dependence upon some Higher Power, but a great change is initiated when the soul which is dependent begins to long for communion or fellowship with the Unseen Power. This is the moment when, in all ethical religions, the sense of the discord between the soul and its own ideals begins to make itself felt. The idea of goodness or holiness in God takes its place in experience; and the very desire for fellowship produces the sense of discord and dissatisfaction. But when this is overcome and the happy sense of fellowship with the Unseen is reached then the future brightens because the soul, in co-operation with the Higher and Unseen Power, now sees its way to a life of progressive power. Thus the third demand of the religious consciousness, viz. that for progress, is met. Compare with these three the theological words "condemnation," "justification," "sanctification." The dissatisfaction with self when measured by some standard of holiness —the longing for fellowship and harmony— finds satisfaction in justification: the yearning

for progress is met by the prospect of sanctification. And again, are not these three demands for dependence, fellowship, and progress met and satisfied in the conception of the Divine Being which has been accepted by Christendom? Dependence, or the need of dependence, every one feels, and that dependence is a happy feeling when we are assured that God is our Father; but with the revelation of Christ there comes the desire for fellowship with God together with a deep sense of how far removed we are from that fellowship, for Christ is the revelation of our failure as well as of our hope. But when the oneness of Christ with us and ourselves with Christ is realized, the way of life becomes one of happy progress from glory to glory with the full assurance that the Spirit of God is now freely working with our spirit for the fulfilment of the great Divine purpose. Thus Father, Son, and Holy Spirit appear operating in these three stages of religious experience.

It will thus be seen that Christian experiences follow a generally harmonious order.

That order is recognized by expert writers, and may perhaps best be described as the stages by which a happy sense of fellowship with the Unseen is reached through an experience of the valuelessness of any earthly satisfaction. Or, to put it into Pauline form, the period of satisfaction has given way to the period in which the self is felt to be the foe of life, and this in its turn is followed by the realization that life is found only outside of self. We may put it in this form: selfishness first, the discovery of the isolation in which selfishness places the soul, and, lastly, the discovery of the joy of the selfless life. These three stages seem to mark the order of the Christian experience as far as this Pauline type is concerned.

Now it is perhaps not irrelevant to notice that this three-fold law holds its place in other departments of life than that of religion. An interesting writer some years ago pointed out that literature, or rather the development of literary power, passed through stages analogous to those which found expression in works of religious experience. Though we have con-

fined our attention to Christian experiences, it is useful to note parallels to the cycle we have described. The spiritual laws had their counterpart in literature. Here, too there must be self-disownment or self-surrender: a justification by faith, a saving doctrine of self-abandonment before true self-expression could be reached. The poet, for example, learns in suffering what he teaches in song. Similarly, the insight of Persian thought seems to have grasped the same great law of life. Consecration by sacrifice created an immunity from defilement. "Can the Haoma that has been touched by the corpse of a dead dog or the corpse of a dead man be made clean again?" Ahura Magda answered: "It can, O Holy Zarathustra, if it has been strained for the sacrifice: no corpse that has been brought unto it makes corruption or death enter into it."[1]

Thus in these experiences the soul oscillates between pain and peace: in it we find two streams of emotion. Sometimes the stream is

[1] "Zendavesta"—Sacred Books of the East, Fargard, vol. vi. p. 72.

turbid and angry, and resembles the unquiet torrent that is dashing through some rocky gorge : the soul is in conflict with itself, uneasy, unrestful. Thus Father John says, " I often oppose God and His holy laws; I am often unbelieving, selfish, proud. I often despise others; I often envy others; I am often avaricious, covetous, sensual, ambitious, impatient, irritable, slothful. I do not pity those who suffer. This and much more like it is my daily experience." But alongside this experience of unrest we may meet with an experience which resembles the quiet river that flows with a happy murmur of contentment gently between its meadow banks. " Then," says Father John, " I am filled with Divine light and joy and blessedness." Thus these two experiences of great peace and great conflict are characteristic of experience, or, as Father John would say, " This also is experience." The oscillations from the state of conflict to the state of rest are found continually in the story of the Saints. It is a story of a harmony sought between the soul and God; it is a harmony between two personalities; not

merely a harmony of thought nor a harmony of feeling alone, but a conviction of peace and concord between the personality of the Christian and the Divine personality which is sought.

When we analyse it we find that it is only reached when the soul can get, as it is expressed, out of itself: "If thou wouldst enter into this heaven on earth forget every care and every thought, get out of thyself that the love of God may dwell in thy soul";[1] so writes Molinos. And again, "By the way of nothing thou must come to leave thyself in God which is the last degree of perfection, and happy wilt thou be if thou canst so use thyself, then thou wilt get thyself gained and find thyself most certainly."[2] The accompanying conception of these thoughts is that all else save God is nothing; and if all else is nothing it is to be nothing to us, and hence the paradox of the happiness of fixing the soul's habitation in nothing: "If thou settest but into the centre of

[1] Molinos, "Golden Thoughts," p. 117.
[2] Page 131.

nothing thou wilt never concern thyself with anything without, . . . nothing will vex thee or break thy peace." And all this is a spiritual experience. It is within: for such souls the Kingdom of God is within, and where this experience is felt it is felt to be an experience not of self but a Divine experience: "For this Divine revelation and inward illumination is that which is evident and clear of itself, forcing by its own evidence and clearness the well-disposed understanding to ascend irresistibly, moving the same thereunto even as the common principles of natural truths move and incline the mind to a natural assent, as that the whole is greater than its part, or that two contradictory sayings cannot be both true nor both false."[1] These experiences, then, it is affirmed, carry their own evidence. As surely as an axiom of Euclid, so surely does the inward witness bring conviction to the soul. They are self-evidencing experiences.

This idea of the certainty of an inward witness is of course open to challenge.

[1] Barclay, p. 4.

It is easy to exaggerate and to misunderstand it. What is the truth in this matter? It is a mistake to take the witness within as though it were a witness which stood alone. If it is meant that a mere subjective impression can carry adequate authority, I doubt it. No single proposition and no single authority can create certainty. As a conclusion requires two premises, so a conviction requires a double authority. The conviction is in the soul, but the authority of conviction is more than the soul. The harmony sought by the soul is the harmony between an earthly and a heavenly personality; it is in the juxtaposition of the two that the soul finds the certainty. When we analyse Christian experiences they will be found to be not merely the presence of an inward light, but the harmony between the light which is within and the light which is without the soul. Even such an ardent quietist as Robert Barclay presupposes the existence of a Divine personality coming into harmony with the human personality. But St. Paul's experience is the type from which

we can best learn the nature of the harmony; he described it as the harmonious and intimate relation between his soul and Christ. The historical Christ, the Christ who had a real personal existence, had been realized by the Apostle, and recognized as the One for whom the seeking soul has long been waiting. The Christ without became a Christ within, because the soul saw in the outward historical Christ the spiritual counterpart of that for which the soul had yearned. No satisfactory harmony rests on the soul alone, nor on any outward personality alone, but on the coming together in the region of spiritual experience of the Christ without and the Christ within.

There had been no spiritual Christ for St. Paul unless there had been a historical Christ, and there would have been no recognition of the historical Christ unless there had been a Christ ideal within. This principle of a spiritual harmony between what has an external existence and that which has been felt within is often stated in the New Testament. St. Paul's phrase "Christ in

you" I take to mean that the Christ ideal is to be found in every man. His other phrase: "You in Christ," describes those who have recognized in the historical Christ the Christ whom they have felt to be within them. The "Christ in us" stands for great spiritual aspirations, yearnings, longings, towards an ideal which is recognized in the historical Christ, and we are in Christ when we can look at the world through the eyes of Christ. When we see the world and life as Christ saw it, as the field of opportunity and service, then we are in Christ. We look at all things in a new light: we see them in Him. The same thought appears to me to be expressed in those words of Christ: "He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep, and the sheep hear his voice, but a stranger will they not hear." The illustration seems to suggest that the soul does not respond to those who approach it through unnatural avenues, that there is in every soul a natural way of approach through the ideals which are deep down in the soul of every man, and this is the door through which the

Shepherd enters. Only when an appeal is made to the true ideal—that is, to the Christ in every man—does the soul respond; but when the true Christ enters appealing to that ideal the soul recognizes His advent at once: the sheep hear His voice.

I think we need a truer harmony between our theological conceptions and the demands of the religious consciousness. The mistake of theologians has too often been that they are satisfied to be speculative and argumentative; their theology has been outside of man's religious consciousness. We do not find this in Christ. Christ always appeals to the religious consciousness. He seems in His Spirit to be absolutely one with our consciousness, and while we often find ourselves challenging the statements of theological teachers, even of St. Paul himself, we never find ourselves challenging the teaching of Christ, for the reason that these teachers are often theorizing outside the range of our capacity for spiritual verification; that is, they are outside of our spiritual experience, while Christ is always within it. "The Son of

Man goes straight, as none other, to the heart of our common humanity." [1]

The religious consciousness becomes a faculty of spiritual verification. It is a faculty by which we test the appeals of different religions. It is not an authority within, as some have thought, but it is a capacity for testing and recognizing authority without. It was the faculty to which Christ appealed when He said: "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things": or when He asked the question: "Why even of yourselves judge ye what is right?" Now when we recognize this capacity, moral judgment may be regarded as the resultant of efforts to claim true self-expression, or it may from the other point of view be described as an unexplained force working in human history. Regarding it as an unexplained force, may it not be that this force is none other than that of which Christian teachers have spoken so often? May we not see here the working of the Spirit of God in the lives of men,

[1] Sanday and Headlam, Epistle to Romans, "International Critical Com.," p. 37.

the witness of that power which is striving to bring all things and all souls into harmony with the Divine Will?

The appeal of a voice from without is ever to a capacity within. The outward force of religion, which shows itself in precept, prophecy, Psalm, or in some great personality, is ever asking for the inward co-operation of the religious consciousness in man. It says, Let the voice within answer the voice without and all may be well.

LECTURE IV

THE question has been asked whether the religious experience, as expressed by St. Paul, is in real harmony with the thought and character of Christ. In other words, can this experience justly be described as Christian? There can be no doubt that the religious experience of the Pauline character is one which has been widely represented in the experiences of members of the Christian Church, and unquestionably the realization of Christ Himself has held the highest place in these experiences. It seems, therefore, almost a contradiction to suggest that these experiences are not to be characterized as Christian. And yet it has been held that when we examine the religious consciousness of Christ it is found to belong

to a different order from that of St. Paul. The religious consciousness of St. Paul, it has been said, is not that of Jesus Christ. Thus Wrede writes, "Unless these two figures are to be deprived of all historical reality, it is obvious that the title 'Jesus' Disciple' is hardly applicable to Paul if it is intended to express his historical relationship to Jesus. He is essentially in comparison with Jesus a new phenomenon, as new as is possible in view of the wide standpoint common to them both. He is far more widely removed from Jesus than Jesus Himself is removed from the noblest forms of Jewish piety. . . . We need not further labour the point that the picture of Jesus' life and work did not determine the character of the Pauline theology." And again, "The teaching of Jesus is directed entirely to the individual personality. Man is to submit his soul to God and to God's Will wholly and without reserve. His preaching is for the most part imperative in character if not in form. The central point for Paul is a Divine supernatural action manifested as a

historical fact, or a complex of Divine actions which open to mankind a salvation prepared for man. He who believes these Divine acts —the incarnation, death, and resurrection of a Divine Being—can obtain salvation. This view is the essential point of Paul's religion and is the solid framework without which his belief would collapse incontinently. Was it a continuation or a further development of Jesus' gospel? Where in this theory can we find the 'gospel' which Paul is said to have 'understood'? The point which was everything to Paul was nothing to Jesus."

Now I am not concerned here with the question whether St. Paul had any personal knowledge of Jesus Christ. This point has been sufficiently dealt with by Weiss, and I am disposed to believe that St. Paul intended his hearers to understand that he had been acquainted with our Lord in the days of His flesh. This, however, is not our special point. Our special point is to discover whether there is such a difference in the Christian theory of St. Paul and the teaching of Christ as to constitute a totally new

departure on the part of St. Paul. In other words, is the religious consciousness as manifested in Christ wholly different in character from that manifested in St. Paul?

The difference in character which is so positively asserted by Wrede was hinted at by Matthew Arnold in an article entitled "A Friend of God" which appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* of April 1887. Matthew Arnold pointed out that the religious experience described in the "De Imitatione" was different in character from that represented in Tauler's work, "The Following of Christ." He seemed to see in the former what he called the element of mythology. There was no way to life and peace but the way of the Cross. That was the sum of the teaching of the Imitation. As far as I can understand the contention of Matthew Arnold, he regarded the "De Imitatione" as having a certain mythological background from which "The Following of Christ" was free: Tauler's work, in fact, represented the religious consciousness of Christ, whereas the "De Imitatione" represented a Pauline religious

consciousness. The facts of Christ's life, as we are wont to describe them—His Incarnation, His Death, and His Resurrection —were essential elements in the religious experience of St. Paul. They represented the triumph of the supernatural over the natural. These, I suppose, are what Matthew Arnold meant when he spoke of mythological elements. But the character of the Christ-like or non-Pauline religious experience assumes that religion and virtue are natural and that the religious conflict is the conflict for the supremacy of what is natural over that which is unnatural. Our subject, therefore, is the relationship between the religious consciousness of St. Paul and that of Jesus Christ.

First, however, it will be well to comment on the use of the words "natural," "unnatural," and "supernatural"; for here, as so often happens, confusion arises from want of some clear definition of the meaning of the terms used. From one point of view virtue, goodness, truth, love — all the best and highest things of life—must be regarded as natural.

They are of God, and they express what is in harmony with God's creative purpose, and therefore they may be described as natural. On the other hand, the works of the flesh, the lower side of life, constantly developing into vice, may be described as natural because unfortunately they appear so often as what may be described as the natural tendencies of men. If I say that selfishness is natural to men, I mean that a great many men are selfish. If I say that selfishness is unnatural, I mean that it is out of harmony with the true order of nature. I do not think that those who held strongly the doctrine of Original Sin and regarded sin as natural to men intended for one moment to limit the use of the word "natural" only to what was vicious and bad, but merely to emphasize the fact that there were strong tendencies in human nature as we know it towards evil. Hence we must be on our guard in reading religious works against the ambiguity which meets us in the word "natural." The same or a similar difficulty exists in the word "supernatural." From the standpoint of human

experience we call that supernatural which we cannot account for by known laws, but from the standpoint of an ideal conception of nature, as the true order of God, we can regard everything, whether capable of explanation or not, as natural, for we must presume that it is in harmony with the order of God. Here again in works of an apologetic character we have to steer our way between words often used in ambiguous senses. Personally, I should like to claim the word "natural" for all that is highest and best inasmuch as to me the order of nature and the order of God are one. But I confess that it is difficult to avoid ambiguity in the use of the word "natural," for when we read in St. Paul's teaching about the Resurrection, first the natural body and then the spiritual body, we feel that our translators are trying to maintain a distinction between the natural and the spiritual; but if we accept the view that nature expresses the order of God, then the spiritual is also natural. It would help us if we could employ terms which avoided these ambiguities, and although I cannot

promise to avoid such, yet as far as I can in what follows I shall avoid the use of "natural" altogether. Certainly when I think of the religious consciousness of Jesus Christ as putting before us what the religious consciousness of man in his ideal state ought to be, I feel more inclined to describe it as the true natural and to regard the experience of St. Paul as abnormal—that is to say, as an experience which is a resultant of some deflection from what is truly natural. But I wish to avoid any words which are likely to cause confusion of thought. The real question before us is to determine whether the religious consciousness of Christ is wholly unlike the religious consciousness of St. Paul.

Now we may admit at the outset that there are great differences between the religious consciousness as we know it in the story of Jesus Christ and that which is expressed by St. Paul. Let us for a moment picture to ourselves, as far as we can do so from the scant story of the Gospels, the character of Jesus Christ and the religious experiences manifested in His career. If we

are to find anywhere the picture of religious consciousness as a power in human hearts we should expect to find it in His life who is admittedly the greatest religious character which the world has seen.

What are the features, then, which the religious consciousness of Christ discloses? First, there is an impressiveness of power about Him: the power in Him is felt rather than seen. Just as it is the weight of the hammer-head which drives the nail home, but which itself is unseen, so is there in every human being a felt but unseen weight of power behind their words and deeds. In many this is felt to be feeble. The hammer-head, in fact, is too light and much effort of hand is needed to drive a nail home. Such men enforce their arguments by noise or volubility. In others this unseen power is great; the hammer-head is weighty and a very small touch is sufficient to drive the nail home. Now our first impression of Christ is the weight of unseen power which was His. "His word," we read, "was with power. He spake with authority and not as

the Scribes." This sense of power continues. He is quiet, but He can act with decisiveness and vigour; without hurry or fluster, but with unhesitating force, He cleansed the Temple. There was power but no brutality. This quiet force is always present, and I think we may say that it was the consciousness of this quiet strength which appealed to womanhood. Mere brute force or bullying strength could never have gathered around it the trustfulness of the women whose lives Christ influenced. But Christ was trusted by women.

But again we feel that this quiet strength has a moral foundation. It is rooted in an invincible conviction that right rules the universe. Let us for a moment recall the Temptation incident. It reminds us of several principles. At the outset of His ministerial career Christ says once for all that right and not might is the foundation of power. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God": and again, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God": are the answers, and they mean that no temptation either of pride

or power or benevolence must be allowed to strain in the slightest degree the righteous order under which we live.

Hence, all through Christ's life, absolute faith in right lay behind His actions, and this, I think, gave the sense of that reserve of power which all felt. This, if we may so speak, was the weight behind the hammer-head, it was the force which compelled obedience when He said with quiet confidence and sweet graciousness to one or to another, "Follow Me." In such a character there was nothing hysterical. It is quiet, sane, and sanely forceful. He does not strive nor cry nor cause His voice to be heard in the streets. Confidence in right, confidence in goodness mark His words and His deeds. We can feel how fitly the words of a happy philosopher suited His method of life: "We wished to do good, we did not wish to make a noise, because good makes no noise, and noise does no good." He is aloof from the agitations of the big world, He has no affinity with impatient ignorance, empty heads, and brazen throats, "expecting

all things in an hour." He has the strength of patience because He has the strength of faith; He can leave all things to God. The critical hours are within His Father's hands. "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, not the angels nor the Son, but the Father." He is thus the pattern of quiet and patient strength, He can enjoy the sunny hours of life, and He can encounter its dark days. He is not carried away by success nor dismayed by failure. The French proverb tells us, "If adversity finds you always on your feet, prosperity will not make you walk faster." The proverb describes the quiet dignity of self-possessed human nature. Christ is never hurried out of self-possession. Faith in right and in goodness are always real powers in life; and faith in the righteousness and goodness of His Father's rule marks His character and His actions. These belong to His religious consciousness, and these have been recognized by those who from various points of view have studied Christ's life and character.

The experimental side of Christ's religious

consciousness has seldom been considered, yet for our purpose this aspect of Christ's character needs attention. We have heard of the inner working of the spiritual experiences of St. Paul, St. Augustine, John Bunyan, and others. Can we find any light thrown by the experience on the spiritual experiences of our Lord?

Now first we may recall that with Him communion with His Father was of His very life. To gain the opportunity for such communion He sacrificed His hours of rest. He rose up before the dawn, He sought the solitary place, and there He prayed. Thus the first and elementary phase of religious experience, the seeking of communion with God, holds a clear, definite, and constant place in His life. If we may say so, the active life of His benevolence was sustained by the contemplative life of His constant hours of spiritual communion. No adequate view of His religious consciousness can be reached if this habit of communion with God is overlooked. More than this, we must all of us have been struck by the way in which

the consciousness of this fellowship or communion with God finds effortless expression in His life. The Christ who sought His Father in prayer on the mountain-top or in the desert place lived in the consciousness of His Father's nearness. At unexpected moments He speaks to His Father: "Father, glorify Thy Name." He has only to ask and He will receive. "Thinkest thou not that I cannot pray to My Father and He will give Me more than twelve legions of angels?" Trust in His Father is so habitual that He has no will against His Father's will: "Nevertheless not what I will but what Thou wilt." The Gospel records are few, but is there not enough in these glimpses of His habits and moods to show us that His religious consciousness led to spiritual experiences, to high faith, patience, devotion, marked by quiet deliberateness and by conspicuous unselfishness? Here we have the shadowing forth of the activity of Christ's religious consciousness.

It might have been thought that if anywhere in the life of Christ there would have been found the best, purest, and fittest pattern of

spiritual experiences; but singularly enough from such a study almost all writers on religious experience have shrunk. Professor James, in his now standard book on the varieties of religious experience, attempts no study of the religious experiences of Christ. He accepted the division of experiences between the once-born, as he called it, and the twice-born. The twice-born are those who have experiences of the great spiritual cataclysm with which the Epistles of St. Paul and the "Confessions of St. Augustine" have made us familiar. The once-born are those who, without having their life cleft asunder by some great spiritual upheaval, have their days bound each to each by natural piety. Now this latter experience Professor James would call the religion of healthy-mindedness, and we may suppose that if Professor James placed the religious consciousness of Christ in any category he would have classed it in that of the once-born or healthy minded. This, perhaps, is what underlies Matthew Arnold's position of which we have spoken. Some writers, like the author of the "De Imitatione," treated religion as a

power which set aside nature. The Cross of Christ, which was the way to peace, stood for the victory of the soul over nature, while in the case of other mystics such as Tauler, of whom we have spoken, religion was the fulfilment of nature, and there was no need of a violent overthrow of nature. In such contrasts we see examples of the two types of the once-born and the twice-born respectively. The qualities of the once-born were set forth by Professor F. W. Newman, who was the original author of these phrases. Thus he writes of the once-born: "They have no metaphysical tendencies, they do not look back into themselves, hence they are not distressed by their own imperfections. Yet it would be absurd to call them self-righteous, for they hardly think of themselves at all. This childlike quality of their nature makes the opening of religion very happy to them, for they no more shrink from God than a child from an emperor before whom the parent trembles. He is to them the impersonation of kindness and beauty; they read His character not in the disordered world of man but in romantic and harmonious

nature. Of human sin they know, perhaps, little in their own hearts and not very much in the world, and human suffering does but melt them to tenderness. Thus when they approach God no inward disturbance ensues."

Now this picture agrees more with the portrait we should draw of our Lord than with the portrait of St. Paul. There is the quiet acquiescence in life, the absence of violent inward convulsion, the joyous trustfulness, the tender sympathy with suffering which we meet in the Gospels.

There is *primâ facie* no difficulty in accepting more than one type of experience among the children of God. Differences of inherited temperament, of early training, of contemporary habits of thought may very well result in different characteristics of religious experience: and ultimately it may be found that varieties of experience are to be accounted for by varieties which correspond to differences of soil and climate and methods of husbandry. But the question assumes a different character when it is affirmed that

the picture of Jesus' life and work did not determine the character of Pauline theology, and that St. Paul is essentially, in comparison with Jesus, a new phenomenon far more widely "removed from Jesus than Jesus Himself is removed from the noblest forms of Jewish piety." To affirm such a difference as this is to remove St. Paul out of the family of those who share the character of Christ. It is not a question of different types of the same plant; it is a question of a wholly different plant. We recognize in Christ a religious consciousness which is beautiful and attractive in its calmness. It hardly knows storm, it accepts and lives in living fellowship with God. It has no revolutionary experience like that of St. Paul. Is there then no family likeness between the experience of our Lord and that of the Apostle?

Let us be careful to understand what we mean by a family likeness in this case. The religious life, so far as experience goes, consists in bringing the human will into harmony with the Divine. Whatever mysteries may surround the questions of free-will, fate, and foreknow-

ledge, there is none in the need of this final harmony between the Will of God and the will of man.

> Our wills are ours we know not how:
> Our wills are ours to make them Thine.

Now this bringing of the will into harmony with God is of the very essence of our Lord's teaching. The disciple whose character will prove itself unshaken by storms is the character formed by the man who does the will of the Father who is in heaven. Similarly, the spirit of such a man's prayer will always be that the Will of God may be paramount and victorious even over his own will. "Thy Will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." More than this, according to the Fourth Gospel, Christ taught that this readiness to bring the will into harmony with God's Will was the secret of the illumination of the soul by larger truth. "He that willeth to do the Will of God shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." Further, and this brings us

nearer to our point, it is the doing of the Father's Will which constitutes the family bond of the Divine family on earth. "He that doeth the Will of My Father the same is My brother and sister and mother." It is thus the surrender of the free human will to the law and purpose of God which marks the step which translates the child of earth into the family of God.

Now there is a great difference, as we may admit, between a life of quiet growth in piety and a life which has known a great spiritual upheaval. But whatever be the incidental differences, every spiritual life must be alike in this, that it is the life of surrendered will. So Christ taught, and so every Christian saint would acknowledge: and did not Jesus Christ also live the life of surrendered will? He was no teacher who did not also live the life He pressed upon others. He lived according to God's Will. He witnesses to this by His deeds as clearly as He teaches it by His words. He found it, He tells us, to be the very invigoration of His soul that He could do God's Will.

"My meat and drink is to do the Will of Him that sent Me. I seek not Mine own will but the will of Him that sent Me." And in the last hour of the power of darkness, when the cup was put to His lips, "Let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless not as I will but as Thou wilt." Christ lived the life of the surrendered will. He grew as man from stage to stage: slowly in His case as in ours the consciousness of growing power was His. As life moved it disclosed gradually the forces which are placed at men's disposal—thought, memory, affection, will. And the will was to Christ the pivot of the life. The will was the sacred gift to man; the one thing which determined life and character; the sacred thing which God Himself does not coerce; the sacred thing which, because it is free, becomes the one thing whose offering is sweet to God. And when Christ came to man's estate He made that great and sacred offering of His Will to God.

A veil hangs over the story, for there are precincts into which we are not admitted.

Every man's soul is a holy of holies into which one alone can enter. But without wishing to lift the veil which hangs over this part of Christ's life, may we not—must we not—infer from what is recorded that this surrender of self on the part of Christ to His Father was a surrender made intelligently, deliberately, heartily? Is not the story of the Temptation the parable of this willing and conscious surrender? It was no otiose offering which our Lord made to His Father: it was the offering of the will, and it was the will in the offering which made it sweet and acceptable to God. So the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews wishes us to believe. He seeks to draw our thoughts away from the material or physical conditions of sacrifice. He fixes our minds upon what was spiritual: "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not. Then said I, 'Lo, I come to do Thy Will, O God,' by the which Will we are sanctified through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all."

We can mark the crisis in the life of our Lord when this great resolve took final shape.

It came at the time of the Temptation, when there spread before Him temptations to win in life by means outside His Father's way and will. The Temptation story, however figurative we may regard it to be, does imply the temptation to act outside the general order of the Father's rule. Briefly, the three temptations are the affirmations of the three great principles of human life—the spirituality of man, the sanctity of nature, and the supremacy of moral order. The spirituality of man is expressed in the words, "Man doth not live by bread alone." The sanctity of nature is expressed in the reply: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God"; that is, to act as though the laws of nature were to be set aside was to act as one who tempted and disregarded the Divine Will as expressed in natural laws. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God," expressed the supremacy of the moral order: even to win what His benevolence desired, the power to rule the world in goodness and truth, the moral order must not be strained; evil must never be done that good may come. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and

Him only shalt thou serve," is the affirmation of the supremacy of the moral order. And these three pictures of temptation all imply the surrender of the will to the Father. He must follow the Father's Will at the cost of bodily suffering, at the cost of quiet obedience to natural law, at the cost of postponing the realization of noble desires. The Temptation, as it seems to me, expresses in vivid and pictorial form that conflict of self-surrender in which the Divine Will is accepted as victorious and for ever the guidance of the human will. We may paint the life of Christ in soft, low tints if we will, but we may take the masculinity out of it by doing so. His life was made of days which blended harmoniously together, but if He shared, as we have been taught that He did, our manhood He knew something of those inner resolves in which the devil seems to claim that which belongs to God. If there was no cataclysm in His life there was the temptation hour, the crisis moment when His great mission claimed the surrender of His will and when His great resolve took on its last and its glorious form.

Thus the one indispensable experience of the religious consciousness—the surrender of will which leads to harmony—belonged to the life of Christ.

LECTURE V

WE have seen that the fundamental principle—the surrender of will—finds its place in our Lord's experience; but even when we realize this we feel that there is a difference between the Pauline experience and that of our Lord. It now becomes our duty to ask what are the features which constitute this difference. We should, perhaps, best answer this question by first asking another. What is it that the man of Pauline type seeks through the cataclysmic experiences we have spoken of? It is emancipation from the thraldom of self. Primarily it is harmony with the Divine order which is sought, but to achieve this he must be set free from the thraldom of self. The cataclysm, as we have called it, is a process of unselfing; but what

constitutes the difficulty in this process? It is the sense of the domination of self in some form or another. From the ideal or Divine standpoint this thraldom of self by self is contrary to the true order of life. The true order of life is service, unselfish service. "None of us liveth to himself." "I am among you as one that doth serve," said Christ. Sin is energy thrown outside the true orbit of life. Sin is the symptom that the life is self-centred, not God-centred. Whatever the specific act of sin may be, its essence is the spirit of self-centredness. St. Paul felt the pressure and pain of this spirit: "I find that when I would do good evil is present with me." The act might be good and praiseworthy, but a subtle selfishness of aim or purpose might vitiate its spiritual validity. The heart of the action was not right. There was no flawless act except an act that proceeded from pure and unfeigned love, for love worketh no ill to his neighbour. The consciousness of sin is not so much the remembrance of sinful acts but the consciousness of the unworthy spirit which

those acts display—the consciousness of the thoughtless and cruel selfishness of which the act was the evidence.

The surrender of self is the indispensable factor in the spiritual life. Without it there is no happy harmony for the soul. But this surrender may be the high, loyal, and flawless offering of the soul, or it may be a surrender only slowly and painfully accomplished after many ineffectual efforts. It may be a glorious act, the memory of which is a perpetual joy, or it may be a prolonged struggle in which the reluctant soul finds that self has often played the traitor. It may be the clean and clear offering of the unblemished heart and the undamaged will, or it may be the offering of that which is torn and maimed, the extorted offering of the slavish soul, the offering of fear, not of love, not the offering of a free heart. But till the offering is a free-will offering there is no complete and acceptable surrender; something, and that the most precious thing of all, is kept back; it is not whole-hearted. To translate this into the language of Christian experience, sin

hangs round all these efforts: the consciousness of an uncleanness of soul is felt and keenly felt because there is uncleanness of soul wherever the offering is not that of the loyal, loving free-will. This gives the poignancy to the cry of the struggling heart: it is the sense of spiritual impotence: "I cannot do the thing that I would."

The struggle to accomplish the great surrender is accompanied in such cases by a self-revelation which often points the way to despair. Now there is no trace of this kind of experience in the case of Christ. His great surrender is unsullied by any such Marsyan robe of selfishness. His is the offering of a sinless and ready will. There is nowhere in the story of Christ the expression of the consciousness of sin. His pure, unblemished spirit offers itself freely to His Father; He moves forward as He grows into the higher planes of experience, without misgiving or remorse; He encounters the crisis of life and takes possession of His completed powers by an act of consecration, for such, we take it, was the Temptation. No ghosts of lost oppor-

tunities or of hideous mistakes or of crude selfishness enter into His experiences; no reluctance, no reserves spoil the beauty and completeness of His surrender. His is the offering as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. In the surrender of the will lies the common ground between the experience of Christ and that of St. Paul, indeed of all Christian men. In the disclosure of the hold which the self has upon the soul is to be found that which differentiates the experience of St. Paul from that of his Master. The experiences belong to the same family, but the experience of the one is the experience of the unspoilt and loyal son: the experience of the other is that of the prodigal who has been into the far country and wasted his substance. It is the experience of the soul which finds at the moment when it would fain bring to God the offering of a clean, pure, and loving spirit that all it has to offer is a stained, half-hearted, sin-laden, and sin-loving spirit. For such there remains only one offering. The free heart is impossible: it can but hope that a broken

and contrite spirit will not be despised. What Christ attained naturally and by a stainless consecration, St. Paul could only reach by conflict and humiliating experience.

The characteristic of the religious consciousness of Christ is this: it was a consciousness of the nearness and certainty of God's presence. He lived in the presence of God, not as those saints who seem to reach the vision of God in moments of ecstasy, not as Dante seeing a glimpse of the Divine but turning faint through excess of light, but as one to whom the presence of God was as natural as the air he breathed—so natural, indeed, that His wonder ever was at man's unbelief. He was as one who saw clearly among men who were blind or who at best only saw men as trees walking.

There is a difference deep and clear between the religious consciousness of St. Paul and that of Jesus Christ, but it is a difference not in the principle of operation but in the subjects of its operation. The principle to which religious consciousness bears witness, and which it insists upon in settling any

operation, is harmony with the Divine through self-surrender. This is seen as clearly in the case of our Lord as in that of His Apostle.

The differences are to be found in differences of personal character: the law, so to speak, is the same in both cases. The materials upon which the law works are different and, in consequence, different conditions are set up, but these different conditions do not invalidate the law which is operative in both cases. A steamer which can attain a certain speed in deep water finds that it cannot reach the same speed when its course is in shallow water. The soldier must give a greater elevation to his rifle when the weather is cold than when it is hot, and when the barometer falls one inch he must deduct one and a half per cent. off his range. There is in these variations no change in the law of dynamics. These only represent what is due to variation of conditions. The vibrations which an earthquake generates travel much more rapidly through the solid, steel-like centre of the earth than

they do around its comparatively loose and broken surface. Where the medium is close, compact, and coherent the transmission is rapid. The earthquake is the same, the force at work is the same, but the conditions of transmission in the one case are favourable, in the other unfavourable. In the one case the message is prompt, in the other it is dilatory. If the subject of the religious consciousness be a compact, coherent being, the response will be rapid, clear, and unhesitating; if the subject be deficient in self-unity, at war with itself, then in proportion to its incoherency will be difficulty and delay in response.

It is, perhaps, the final truth on this matter to say that the way in which the religious consciousness expresses itself must vary with the temperaments and characters of those who are its subjects. In some the expression will be stormy and prolonged, in others gentle and quiet. Some reach the sense of harmony after the clash of self-conflict, others reach it with the same insensible stages with which the seasons succeed one another. But there are

none in which the self-surrender is not the end towards which the religious consciousness tends. In the case of Christ the self-surrender was never a strange or a hard thing, to Him it was the inevitable meaning of life: but in cases where life has been in any way self-centred the change to a love-centred life must be a revolution whether that change comes swiftly or slowly, with noise or insensibly as the lengthening days of summer. In the case of Christ there was resolution but no revolution, the resolve of self-surrender for His mission, but no revolution, for His life never had but one surrender, it was love-centred from the beginning. Herein lies, as I think, the difference between His religious consciousness and that of St. Paul and others of his type. It is not a difference in the fundamental principle of spiritual harmony, though it is an evidence of the uniqueness of Christ's character. He stands so near to God that He is outside the region of those storm-centres which sin, self-reproach, remorse, and rooted selfishness occasion in others. In other words, He is an example, an ideal, of glorious self-surrender,

a pattern after which all may strive, but He is not a type whose counterpart can be found in any human being. That He did not experience the dark hours of spiritual remorse was due to the fact that His loyalty of heart left no room for regret or repentance. His religious consciousness was the consciousness of a single purpose always in harmony with the Divine Will. He delighted to do God's Will, His law was written in His heart. Precisely because such a harmony of heart and life was the desire but unattainable goal of St. Paul he experienced pain of soul like that of a bird baffled by the weakness of a wounded wing.

So far, then, as divergence of spiritual experiences go, the religious consciousness of Christ gives us the normal experience of the unspoilt soul and is based on the essential principle of self-surrender, the only principle by which the higher harmony of life is reached. But the experiences of St. Paul are the sadder and darker experiences of a soul which, having fallen below the ideal, meets the inevitable difficulties which wait upon those who have

to retrace their steps with bitter tears upon the road of life.

But we have not exhausted the significance of the relationship between the experiences of Christ and those of His Apostle when we have noted their identity in principle and their difference in form. According to the view of St. Paul, Christ gives us the norm of human character and action. He is the ideal for humanity, but He is more. His life is a spiritual symbol to the awakened spirit, the facts of Christ's life convey a meaning deeper than the surface: they indicate the great spiritual law of life. Our Lord always pressed upon men's thoughts the inward aspect of things; outward signs He repudiated. The only valid condition of true human life was to be found within. The Kingdom of God was within; the heart was the measure of life, genuineness of nature, a single eye, was the condition of vision; and as He insisted on this inwardness so also were the facts of His life taken as having a message for the inner life of man. That life of Christ, with its unwearied kindliness, its loneliness, its suffer-

ing, the death upon the Cross, followed by the rising again into life, became not merely pathetic historical facts but great spiritual symbols: they furnished the silver thread to guide men through the labyrinth of life. The Christ who had lived and died was a Christ who must be realized in the life of discipleship; the claim of St. Paul—and it is a claim reiterated in the experience of thousands—is that He who was seen in flesh long ago is a living Christ, a Christ alive in the souls of men.

What the struggling soul seeks is, as we have seen, harmony. The Christ of history set before men the highest reality of life, the perfect manifestation of harmony with the Divine; the soul of the disciple craves for that harmony so that it too may reach the highest reality and truest expression of life. The Christ of history is a glorious inheritance to the sons of men, but it is not enough for the soul. The ideal once realized must be always realized. Christ must not only be real in history, He must be real in experience. To put this in another form,

beside the Christ outside us, the historic Christ, there is a hidden Christ, a Christ who is a fact of personal spiritual consciousness. He who was real in history has become real in the inner experience. St. Paul not only spoke of the outline of historical facts—namely, that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He had been raised again, that He appeared to Kephas and to others, but he also spoke of a Christ to be formed in the soul, of a soul who was our life, of a Christ in us and a Christ who lived in us. The peace of the soul —that is, the sense of harmony—depended on the realization of the inward Christ on the part of those who doubtless had first been attracted by the outward Christ. This seems to me to be the method of the verification of faith to the soul of the Apostle. The outward or historic Christ was a concrete fact, but it remained a barren fact till it became related to a spiritual law or principle. The realization of this principle comes with the consciousness of the inward Christ: "Christ in you the hope of glory." Thus there come together two con-

verging lines, one from the realm of fact, the other from that of experience. These uniting make the syllogism of the soul. Another Apostle speaks in the same fashion. The historic Christ of flesh and blood was the concrete fact, "that which we have seen with our eyes and our hands have handled"; but there was the inner witness also, "the Spirit which beareth witness with our spirit." It is a duality of proof, outward and inward, which brings conviction and secures verification. The historic Christ and the indwelling Christ make the verifying Christ to the soul. This has been the continuous view of the Church of Christ. The incidents of His life demand a spiritual counterpart in the disciple's life. Is Christ born? we must be regenerated and renewed of the Holy Spirit. Does He die? we must die to sin. Does He rise? we must rise in newness of life. Does He ascend? we must in heart and mind to heaven ascend and with Him continually dwell. Thus the historic facts are not left as barren incidents, they are living powers, they express eternal principles of spiritual growth. It has been said that

certain mythological notions were introduced into Christianity by St. Paul. I am not careful to claim for St. Paul immunity from the influence of crude ideas, provincial notions, contemporaneous methods of argument. But making allowance for all these, the broad fact remains that he treated the incidents of Christ's life as the witness to great eternal principles of continuous application. He set out his reasoning often on forensic lines. His line of argument was sometimes that of a lawyer, but when he spoke out of the fullness of his heart he told us of the transfigured life which he knew, of the Christ who loved him and lived in him; and the central thought of his heart was this, that no man lived truly till he had died to himself. He taught the truth of which Goethe sang—

> Till this truth thou knowest, die to live again,
> Stranger-like thou goest in a world of pain.

And in this he was at one with Him who said, "He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life shall find it."

Lastly, we are met by a difficulty which is

a philosophical one. It has been said that historical foundations are inadequate to establish eternal principles. Historical incidents come and go: there is no necessary eternity about them. We may admit it, and yet surely we may plead that a historic incident may have a lasting representative character. The fall of Newton's apple was only incidental, but to the man that had eyes to see it represented an eternal law. One fact may have an eternal significance, and if that one fact is seen to be repeated in typical or representative form, then the very continuousness thus seen becomes a witness of the lasting significance of the original incident. And thus it is that, as we have seen, the historical facts of Christ's life have been viewed by the Church as significant of eternal truths. But this if it had only been a theological theory would still have had little validity, unless it had been verified in continuous spiritual experience. And this surely has been the case. Time would fail us to bring evidence of this, but we have only to read in the most superficial way the Hymns of Christendom,

the confessions of Saints, the records of spiritual struggle, to know that the simple historic facts of Christ's life have become incorporated into Christian experience and afford the best description of the nature of those experiences. There may not be in these facts evidence or proof as understood by science, but there is unquestionably an evidence which carries weight to the enlightened and illuminated soul. The historic Christ coming as the spiritual Christ brings His own authentication to the souls of men. I am ready to admit that in the history of Christendom there has been a tendency to externalize these principles and to speak as though salvation came to the man who rests only on the belief in certain historic facts or theological propositions; but this is foreign to the primitive Christian spiritual realization. But wherever there has been spiritual life in the Church there the great teachers have sought, if I may use Professor Green's words, "to bring their people to enact in their own hearts and lives the work which the creeds rehearse, so to affect

them as that they shall die and rise again with Christ." Where such an experience exists there is no need to trouble oneself about the minutiæ of evidences or to be over anxious to lift the cloud which hangs over historical sources: the light which comes to the soul floods the whole being and flings a thousand petty controversies into insignificance. The Divine voice has spoken to the soul: the Divine presence is seen:

> Speak to Him thou, for He hears, and spirit with spirit can meet;
> Closer is He than breath, and nearer than the hands and feet.

They need not that any should witness, for they have the witness within.

Here we return to the great principle with which we started, the witness within, the fact of the witness of experience.

And so we close with that which has been for religious minds the last and culminating appeal — the appeal not to the outward, neither to heaven nor to earth, but the appeal to the living sensibilities of the soul;

and the answer, I think, will always be—Only in the Cross can the highest life be found: only in the Cross do you truly live: only in Him do you find your fullest self-expression; the self which you surrendered is restored to you in Him.

One other aspect of the significance of this religious experience should be noted, for it gives a completeness to the drama of the soul.

The entering into this harmony is through conflict, but this conflict is the overcoming of the self. If we inquire, for instance, of Dr. Starbuck, who made what we may describe as a scientific examination of religious experiences, he tells us that this religious experience is "a process of unselfing"; he quotes examples from the records which he possesses which indicate that this unselfing process is practical. "I began," says one, "to work for others." Another writes, "I had more tender feeling towards my family and friends." Or again, "I felt everybody to be my friend." "It is clear," says the Professor, "that in a large per cent. of

cases the immediate result of conversion is to call the person out from himself into active sympathy with the world outside." Again he describes it in these words: "The central fact underlying both is the formation of a new ego." Does not this exactly correspond with the Apostle's declaration: "I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me"? The Apostle realizes the fact of this new ego; the conflict therefore ends in the unselfing process; the old self, or the old Adam, as St. Paul would call it, has passed away; the soul has learnt what it is to become a new creature. But this experience, which is the suppression of self, is, from another point of view, the realization of self. If man was made in the image of God, if the self-centred life is utterly out of harmony with the God-like life, then the man who steps from the self-centred life into the love-centred life steps into his true life. The unselfing is not the annihilation of self, but the realization of the true self. We can understand in the light of this fact the reverence and affection for the Cross of Christ which is so universal

in Christendom. It is not the Cross associated with tragic remembrances, but it is the Cross illuminated by the sense of the victorious regaining of the true humanity, the restoration of the love-centre to the universe, the symbol of the restoration of the love-centre to every human being in God's world.

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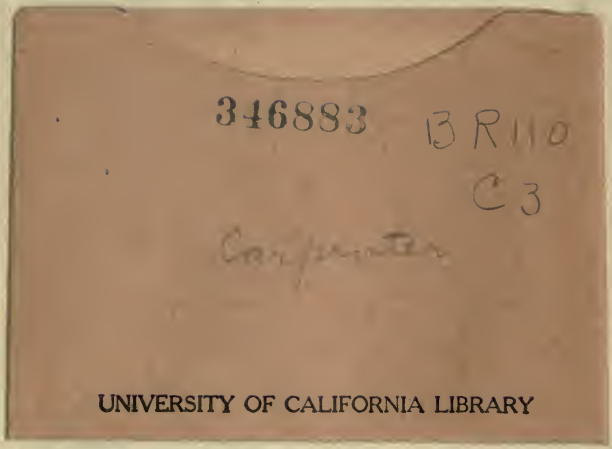
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